WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a natural vanilla extract comprising:

~~(a) treating cured vanilla beans in an aqueous medium with an enzyme material having glycosidase activity; and~~

~~(b)~~ contacting ~~the enzyme-treated~~ cured vanilla beans with an aqueous alcohol solvent at a pressure of ~~at least~~ about 10 to 48 psig and a temperature of at least about 170°F to provide a primary extract.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) The process of claim ~~2~~ 51, comprising treating the cured vanilla beans with the enzyme material at about 70 to 180°F for about 0.25 to 2 hours.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 1, comprising ~~extracting~~ contacting the ~~enzyme-treated~~ cured vanilla beans in the alcohol solution under a pressure of about 10 to ~~60~~ about 45 psig.

7. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 1, comprising ~~extracting~~ contacting the ~~enzyme-treated~~ cured vanilla beans in the aqueous alcohol solvent at about 180 to 250°F.

8. (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein the natural vanilla extract is at least a single fold vanilla extract.

9. (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein the aqueous alcohol solvent is an aqueous solution comprising ethanol.

10. (Original) The process of claim 9 wherein the aqueous alcohol solvent includes about 30 to 65 vol.% ethanol.

11. (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein the aqueous alcohol solvent includes ethanol, isopropanol or a mixture thereof.

12. (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein the aqueous alcohol solvent includes about 30 to 65 vol.% alcohol.

13. (Original) The process of claim 1, further comprising removing a portion of the aqueous alcohol solvent in the primary extract to provide a concentrated extract.

14. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 1, further comprising adding ~~water, alcohol or a mixture thereof~~ an additional solvent to the primary extract to provide a diluted extract.

15. (Original) The process of claim 14 wherein the additional solvent comprises water, alcohol, corn syrup, glycerin, propylene glycol, sucrose or a mixture thereof.

16. (Currently Amended) The process of claim ~~1~~ 51 wherein the enzyme material comprises cellulase activity, glucosidase activity, hemicellulase activity, xylanase activity, pectinase activity or a combination thereof.

17. (Currently Amended) The process of claim ~~1~~ 51 wherein the enzyme material comprises glucosidase activity.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Canceled)

20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 1 wherein the aqueous alcohol solvent comprises at least about 35 vol.% ethanol; the cured vanilla beans have a water content of no more than about 25 wt.%; and the contacting step comprises contacting the ~~enzyme-treated~~ cured vanilla beans and the aqueous alcohol solvent in a slurry containing no more than about 1.0 gallons of the aqueous alcohol solvent per 13.35 ounces of the cured vanilla beans ~~employed in the treating step~~.

22. (Original) A vanilla extract produced by the process of claim 1.

23. (Original) The vanilla extract of claim 22 wherein said vanilla extract is at least a single fold vanilla extract.

24. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a natural vanilla extract comprising:

~~(a) treating cured vanilla beans in an aqueous medium with an enzyme material having glycosidase activity in a reactor;~~

(a) ~~(b) introducing a second solvent comprising alcohol into the reactor at ambient pressure to provide an aqueous alcohol solvent, wherein the aqueous alcohol solvent comprises about 30 to 65 vol.% alcohol~~ combining in a reactor cured vanilla beans and an aqueous alcohol solvent having a vapor pressure and comprising about 30 to about 65 vol% alcohol;

(b) ~~(c)~~ sealing the reactor including the aqueous alcohol solvent and ~~enzyme-treated~~ cured vanilla beans under ambient pressure; and

(c) ~~(d)~~ contacting the ~~enzyme-treated~~ cured vanilla beans ~~with~~ and the aqueous alcohol solvent in the sealed reactor at a processing temperature of at least about 170°F and a pressure dictated by the vapor pressure of the aqueous alcohol solvent at the processing temperature to provide a primary extract.

25. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 24, further comprising ~~introducing whole cured vanilla beans into the reactor with the aqueous medium and the enzyme material to form a slurry;~~

~~wherein the step of treating includes~~ agitating the slurry with a plow or chopping blade such that the ~~whole~~ cured vanilla beans are comminuted into smaller particles.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Canceled)

28. (Canceled)

29. (Original) The process of claim 24 wherein the aqueous alcohol solvent includes about 40 to 65 vol.% ethanol.

30. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 24, further comprising separating the primary extract from the ~~enzyme-treated~~ cured vanilla beans under ambient pressure.

31. (Canceled)

32. (Currently Amended) The process of claim ~~31~~ 25 wherein the ~~comminuted enzyme-treated vanilla beans~~ smaller particles have an average particle size of about 1/8 to 1.5 inch.

33. (Canceled)

34. (Canceled)

35. (Canceled)

36. (Original) The process of claim 24 wherein the aqueous alcohol solvent has a pH of about 4.5 to 6.0.

37. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 24 wherein the alcohol ~~is~~ includes ethanol, isopropanol or a mixture thereof.

38. (Original) The process of claim 24, further comprising diluting the aqueous alcohol solvent in the reactor by introducing additional water into the reactor.

39. (Original) The process of claim 38 wherein introducing the additional water comprises introducing the water into the sealed reactor under conditions that do not increase the pressure in the reactor.

40. (Original) The process of claim 38 wherein introducing the additional water comprises cooling the contents of the sealed reactor, opening the cooled reactor, adding the additional water to cooled reactor and resealing the reactor.

41. (Canceled)

42. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a natural botanical extract comprising:

~~(a) treating a solid botanical material in an aqueous medium with an enzyme material having glycosidase activity; and~~

~~(b)~~ contacting ~~the enzyme-treated~~ botanical material with an aqueous alcohol solvent at a pressure of at least about 10 to about 48 psig and a temperature of at least about 170°F to provide a primary extract.

43. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a natural vanilla extract comprising:

~~(a) treating cured vanilla beans in an aqueous medium with an enzyme material having glycosidase activity in a reactor, wherein the aqueous medium includes no more than about 10 vol.% alcohol;~~

(a) ~~(b) introducing alcohol into the reactor at ambient pressure to provide an aqueous alcohol solvent, wherein the aqueous alcohol solvent comprises about 30 to 65 vol.% alcohol~~ combining cured vanilla beans and an aqueous alcohol solvent comprising about 30 to 80 vol% alcohol in a reactor;

(b) ~~(c)~~ sealing the reactor containing a slurry including the aqueous alcohol solvent and ~~enzyme-treated~~ cured vanilla beans under ambient pressure; and

(c) ~~(d)~~ agitating the slurry in the sealed reactor with at least one of a plow and chopping blade at a temperature of about 180 to 250°F to provide a primary extract.

44. (Canceled)

45. (Canceled)

46. (Canceled)

47. (Canceled)

48. (Original) The process of claim 43, comprising agitating the slurry in the sealed reactor for about 0.5 to 5 hours.

49. (New) The process of claim 1 wherein the cured vanilla beans are comminuted into smaller particles.

50. (New) The process of claim 49 wherein the smaller particles have an average size of about 1/8 to 1.5 inch.

51. (New) The process of claim 1, comprising first treating the cured vanilla beans in an aqueous medium with an enzyme material.

52. (New) The process of claim 1 wherein the pressure is about 10 to 40 psig.

53. (New) The process of claim 1 wherein the pressure is about 10 to 35 psig.

54. (New) The process of claim 42 wherein the pressure is about 10 to 45 psig.

55. (New) The process of claim 42 wherein the pressure is about 10 to 40 psig.

56. (New) The process of claim 42 wherein the pressure is about 10 to 35 psig.

57. (New) The process of claim 42, wherein the botanical material is comminuted into smaller particles.

58. (New) The process of claim 42, comprising first treating the botanical material in an aqueous medium with an enzyme material.

59. (New) The process of claim 53 wherein the enzyme material comprises cellulase activity, glucosidase activity, hemicellulase activity, xylanase activity, pectinase activity or a combination thereof.

60. (New) The process of claim 53 wherein the aqueous medium includes no more than about 1.0 vol.% alcohol.

61. (New) The process of claim 43 comprising continuously agitating the slurry in the sealed reactor.

62. (New) The process of claim 43 wherein agitating the slurry comminutes the cured vanilla beans into smaller particles.

63. (New) The process of claim 24 wherein the pressure is about 10 to 48 psig.

64. (New) The process of claim 24 wherein the pressure is about 10 to 40 psig.

65. (New) The process of claim 43 comprising agitating the slurry at a pressure of about 10 to 48 psig.

66. (New) The process of claim 43 comprising agitating the slurry at a pressure of 10 to 40 psig.